

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS

Representing City and County Governments of the San Francisco Bay Area



MEMO

Submitted by: Kenneth Kirkey

Subject: Authorization for the Executive Director or Designee to Enter into Agreement for Grant from US Geological Survey

Date: May 7, 2009

Executive Summary

Authorization is requested for the Executive Director or designee to enter into agreement with the US Geological Survey to update public outreach materials on ABAG's website. Agreement will not exceed \$80,000. The proposed project, if funded, will likely start in early 2010 and will end 12 months later. There is no match. However, the grant application has a subcontract for \$15,000.

Recommended Action

Authorization of action.

Next Steps

None at this time.

Attachments Memo: **Background and Scope of Work of Proposed USGS Proposal**

Item 6.E.

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Background and Scope of Work of Proposed USGS Proposal

ABAG has the unique function of synthesizing all the scientific, engineering, and preparedness information available from various sources, as well as performing its own studies and models related to earthquake hazards in the Bay Area, and presenting it in one location that focuses only on the risks and hazards to the Bay Area. ABAG takes great pride in communicating scientific earthquake hazards research in a way that is understandable to the non-scientific community. Over the years ABAG has developed a popular earthquake and hazards website, receiving several thousand hits a day.

Research on risk communication tells us that the likelihood that a person will mitigate against a known risk depends on how the risk is presented to them. Furthermore, people who are very familiar with a particular risk respond differently to the same message to mitigate against the risk than those who are relatively unfamiliar. The proposed ABAG effort has the principal objective of effectively communicating the risk of earthquake hazards using the internet in the best way possible for the various user groups of this website.

In this proposal ABAG proposes to improve on the past success of its website by conducting a variety of tasks, including:

- Studying the scholarly body of knowledge in various fields such as communications, marketing and public relations to understand how to best tailor its message of mitigation to the various user groups that utilize ABAG's earthquake hazard information, including government officials, infrastructure planners, business and housing owners, tenants and scientific researchers.
- Holding a series of discussion sessions with a review committee to understand what needs they have as users of the website and to provide recommendations for modifying and updating the website. They will also review the draft product and make suggestions before it is finalized.
- Updating the website to include separate pages for the various user groups of the website to better target hazard and mitigation information to those users.
- Updating the user interface with the GIS maps on the website, including improving the navigation between different hazard maps and connecting maps with mitigation strategies more directly, revising and updating the map legends by improving the language to be more understandable to non-scientists and including links to more detailed information about how the maps were developed and what they mean.
- Performing usability studies to enhance the effectiveness of the website in providing vital information about hazard mitigation and preparedness.